



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY URGING ELIGIBLE SENIORS TO SIGN UP FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUG ASSISTANCE AS 2004 BENEFIT DEADLINE NEARS

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley is urging eligible North Carolinians to enroll in Senior Care, the state's prescription drug assistance program, before Dec. 31, which is the last day seniors can take advantage of the 2004 benefit of \$1,200.

"We are working to enroll as many seniors as possible by Dec. 31," Easley said. "Our seniors were there for us when we needed them. We must be there for them now. Helping them with prescription drug assistance is an important step. I am asking all our citizens to help spread the word to families and friends that may be eligible for assistance."

Eligible seniors who have their application received and processed by Dec. 31 will be entitled to a total of \$2,400 in assistance between now and the end of next year. Seniors whose applications are processed after Dec. 31 will only be eligible for a benefit of \$1,200 for the 2005 calendar year.

Senior Care was first implemented in 2001 and is administered by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. In September 2004, Easley announced the expansion of Senior Care, allowing more seniors to participate, increasing the number of drugs that are covered and reducing out-of-pocket prescription drug costs. For more information on Senior Care, visit www.ncseniorcare.com or call 1-866-226-1388.

Senior Care benefits for North Carolina residents 65 and older include:

- \$2,400 from now through the end of 2005 for applications processed by December 31, 2005;
- 90 to 95 percent of prescription drug costs are paid by the state until the benefit is exhausted;
- No more restrictions on drug coverage or eligibility based on diagnosis ; and
- An increase in the upper income threshold to \$23,275 for a single person and \$31,225 for a married person, and inclusion of seniors with drug coverage through a Medicare supplemental policy or the Veterans' Administration.

Currently, Senior Care has more than 60,000 enrollees. Easley proclaimed Oct. 26 as "Senior Care Day" and worked with aging offices across the state to enroll seniors in the program. Those efforts resulted in an additional 5,000 applicants.

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